



A Harp of the West



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Isabel Bickey

A HARP OF THE WEST

BY
ISABEL RICHEY
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BUFFALO
CHARLES WELLS MOULTON
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A HARP OF THE WEST

THE MILLIONAIRE'S DREAM.

THE millionaire banker was sitting
Alone by his anthracite fire,
And fanciful shadows were flitting
Now hither, now yon, to admire
The Gobelins of time-faded splendor,
The rugs from far India's loom,
The radiant brass of the fender,
The paintings that hid in the gloom.
They danced on the carvings by Dürer,
They bowed to the gods of Cathay,
And idols the Sultans of Ghûr,
Had worshiped in lands far away.

He slept, and his soul was uplifted,
And borne on the Night's ebon breast,
To lands where the red sun still sifted,
His beams o'er the drouth-stricken West.
The corn standing dead by the highways
Bore nought of the life-saving grain,
The cattle that roamed in the byways
Were seeking for moisture in vain.

The hot winds that rustled the grasses
Spoke low to his listening ear,
"Oh think of the famine-struck masses,
Oh, look on our harvest all sere!"

He saw the grim face of Starvation
Look out from the half-open door,
He saw the Storehouse of the Nation
As bare as a wide threshing floor!
He heard the babes calling for mercy,
"Oh, give of your millions to save!"
But nought from a plethoric purse, he
To succor the needy ones gave!

He sleeps, but his spirit is roaming
Away from his body of clay,
The shadows still dance in the gloaming,
And bow to the gods of Cathay.

He stands where the waters are sweeping
The earth with a glittering scythe,
He sees where the torrents are heaping
Up bodies that fearfully writhe;
The gold of a fair woman's tresses,
The snow of her bosom all cold,
Death touches with silent caresses,
Then clasps in a passionate fold.
Out there, a pale arm in the darkness,

Is laid on a pillow of moss,
And cut by another whose starkness,
Forms with it a white marble cross.
He hears the weak moan of the dying,
Storm-tossed on that ocean-swept shore,
And voices of women there crying,
Half lost in the elements roar.
The winds say, "Oh give to the needy!"
The waves say, "The billows of Time,
Are heartless as we, and as greedy,
They'll cover you, too, with their rime!"
He hears, but the love of his riches,
Lies close to his world-hardened heart,
Fills full all its corners and niches,
And leaves for sweet Pity no part.

He slept, and he heard a voice calling,
"Come, look on the ocean of fire!
Its terrors so red and appalling,
Would satisfy Satan's desire!"
The glare of that furnace was blinding,
The face of the heavens was white,
The flames in their fury unwinding
Had burned up the curtains of Night.
The terrified creatures were moaning,
And seeking for shelter in vain,
The pines of the forest were groaning,
Like giants, in travail and pain.

The voice of the dying was lifted,
And shouted, "Oh give of your store!"
Till on the hot wind it was wafted,
And came to him o'er and o'er.
But not for the cries of Starvation,
And not for the ocean-swept land,
Nor yet for the red devastation
The Millionaire opened his hand.

He slept, and the angel of Sorrow,
Swept downward on fluttering wing
And whispered, "To-morrow, to-morrow!
Thy soul shall bow down to the King!"
Oh, black was the sky that hung o'er him!
Oh, lonely and trackless the way
That stretched in the darkness before him,
And wild grew his visage and gray.
He cried to the angel of Sorrow,
"Oh, pity me! pity and save!
Oh, come not to-morrow, to-morrow,
I can not go down to the grave!
My good deeds are many, are many,"
He wailed, "But they center in Self,
And have not the worth of a penny,
Thy God is the demon of Pelf!"
"Oh, how can I leave my young daughter!
Spare, spare me, the chastening rod!"
Then true to his spirit of barter,
He offered a bargain to God:

“For ten years of health and of plenty,
I'll give thee one-fourth of my store,
And if Thou wilt grant to me twenty,
I'll give again, equal and more!”

Then stern spoke the angel of Sorrow,
“The Mercy of God is not bought!
Thou 'lt answer in Heaven to-morrow
For deeds that thou mightest have wrought.”

Alas! that the spirit, God-given
Should lose for a handful of gold,
The unfading glories of Heaven,
And treasures that can not be told.
He woke, to his daughter's caresses,
His purple coat covered with dust,
And the hand that she lovingly presses,
Has fingers red-coated with rust.

The shadows, still parting and meeting,
Kept time to the unsteady gleam,
The banker kept slowly repeating,
“Thank God! it was only a dream!”

TRANSITION.

WHEN one has passed beyond our mortal ken,
We wring our hands and weep,
Calling, "Return," in accents wild and deep,
"Oh, friend, return again!"

Who climbs the heights beyond the snowy range,
And sees the stores of summer all unrolled,
Would he return again through night and cold,
To what must seem a country dark and strange?

We wail him dead, and search the vaulted blue,
With glance foreshortened by a mist of tears,
A veil that cuts off God's unnumbered years,
And hides the heavenly hill-tops from our view.

He is not dead, He is but newly born,
His soul has reached the mountain tops above,
With wings outspread upon the winds of love,
He greets the breaking of celestial morn.

THE BUTTERFLY.

GRAY butterfly with wings of gauze and gold,
Thou'rt illy fitted for the winter blast,
And winter cometh certainly and fast
With icy breath, and stormy wind, and cold
Dark cloudy days. The blossoms of the wold
Will fade and die. Tell me what hope thou hast
Of shelter or a safe retreat? The past
Is done, what future will thy scroll unfold?

“ These gauzy wings are laid aside at will,
And underneath are pinions strong as steel
To bear me and support, while I fulfill
The mission God assigns, Come woe or weal
I do not fear the storms, because I feel
That Love’s broad wings will be my refuge still.”

DENIAL.

I do not love her, yet I find the rose
Is sweeter than it lay upon her breast;
From every flower her fingers have caressed,
A far more sweet and holy fragrance flows.

I do not love her, yet somehow the sun
Shines brighter when it falls upon her head,
The brook unwinds its narrow, silver thread
With gayer laughter where her footsteps run.

I do not love her, yet this world would be
A sad and dreary place if she were not,
And happiness were in the humblest cot—
If Mary shared its humbleness with me.

SYMPATHY.

THE lily is fair, but so is the rose,
And far more human, I do insist;
The lily is pale and cold as the snows,
But the rose has been kissed.

How do I know? Why just look at her there!
She's blushing yet in delighted shame,
And hanging her head with that guilty air
Shows that she is to blame.

I grant you, yes, that the lily is fair,
But the sweetest thing in life she missed;
And the rose is my choice to pluck and wear,
For we both have been kissed!

PROGRESSION.

HEARTS change. Intelligences grow.
The thing you loved a little while ago
Is common now, and small, and tame,
It almost makes you blush with shame
To think you loved it so.

And yet you do not realize
That what to-day you dearly love and prize,
Will undergo the selfsame change,
Will seem as pitiful and strange,
And you will it despise.

There's nothing constant underneath the sun,
We're seeking something better, every one.
Change is the universal law,
We follow where the magnets draw,
Till our brief race is run.

SONG OF SPRING.

SING me a song of a glad new earth,
Of a thin keen blade with a diamond hilt,
Of young buds ripe for the hour of birth,
And of leaves a-tilt.

Sing me a song of the crystal cups
That noiseless clink to a dream-god's health,
Of the blue-eyed maid that nectar sups
From the dream-god's lips by stealth.

Sing me a song of a gleaming sail,
A white sail high in the ether blue,
That ripples and lilts on the west'ring gale,
Where the morning stars shine through.

Sing me a song of a springtime noon,
Of a face like May, in a wreath of green,
Of a heart that singeth a merry tune,
Where the branches lean.

Sing me a song of the swift, swift flight,
Of a vivid vest and a snow-white coat,
Of the steel-gray sparrow greeting night
By a rill remote.

Sing me a song of the red-haired Mars,
Of the god of war with his lances bright,
How the new moon gathers the silver stars
In her veil of white.

Sing me a song of a maiden's eyes,
Of a golden head on a lover's breast,
Of a scarlet lip, that all outvies
The low-hung west.

PICTURES.

THOU art an artist and what wilt thou paint?
Scenes with Italian skies all gold and blue,
Vine-tracery, red sunlight falling through
On ancient pottery carved and quaint?
A graceful, crimson-skirted, dark-eyed saint
With full and smiling lips, exhaling dew
As sweet as nectar, and another who
Adores her, but whose youthful heart is faint?

Nay! let it be where rafters dark and old
Shut out the pallor of a winter's sky;
Where sweet Samaritan with locks of gold,
With gentle softness and a pitying sigh,
Offers to misery the goblet cold,
And soothes the anguish of the orphan's cry.

HAVE YOU NO CHILD?

HAVE you no child, no little, helpless one,
To nestle in your arms, when day is done,
To stroke your cheek with soft and tender palm,
And smooth the waves of trouble into calm?

Is there no baby voice to sing or shout?
No sudden tears? No pretty little pout
Of rosy mouth, so honey-sweet to kiss?
No liquid eyes, to fill your soul with bliss?
I pity you, if you have none of these,
Far more to wedded love, than bloom to trees.

What will you do when age shall come apace,
And mar the youth and beauty of your face,
And dim your eye, and make your form to bend,
Whose hand shall guide your footsteps to the end;
If you've no child to love and comfort you,
When winter time shall come, what will you do?

ADVICE.

A N everyday winter has snows, my lad;
An everyday heart has its woes, my lad;
The book of Life's written in prose, my lad;
And song-birds are fewer than crows, my lad.

That friendship is friendship indeed, my lad,
That's strongest when man is in need, my lad,
Life's flower becometh a weed, my lad,
When selfishness goeth to seed, my lad.

Then dance while the heatherbells chime, my lad,
They furnish a music sublime, my lad.
Your youth is your happiest time, my lad,
The only page written in rhyme, my lad.

The roses bloom only in June, my lad,
When all of earth's chords are in tune, my lad.
The sun's in the west after noon, my lad,
And it will be evening soon, my lad.

So plant your grain early and deep, my lad,
And pile your good deeds in a heap, my lad;
For what a man sows he shall reap, my lad,
Then there'll be a long season of sleep, my lad.

DREAMS.

SLEEP is the golden road to Paradise,
And dreams the stairway where our souls
ascend,
To seek among the heavenly throng, some friend
The veil of immortality denies
Our waking vision. Severed are the ties
That bind us down to earth, while angels mend
The threads by sorrow broken, seraphs lend
Their wings to bear us upward to the skies.

Who has not walked with mother on the plains
Of light, or little sister gone before ?
Who has not heard the music of the strains
At night, that echo from the other shore ?
Come, bind me with your sweet and subtle chains
O Morpheus, and let me wake no more!

THE SADDEST HOUR.

I THINK the saddest hour is when we find
Some measure of our grief has worn away,
That with more fortitude, we can survey
Our shattered hopes, find something left behind,
Now that the bitter tears have ceased to blind
With misty veil, that black has turned to gray
Before we knew, and here and there a stray
Sunbeam peeps through, to make the soul resigned.

This is the saddest hour it seems to me,
Because the heart can offer no defense,
But humbly owns its weak inconstancy,
Holds grief with clinging fingers, and laments
That sorrow only lingers for awhile,
Then fades away before God's loving smile!

LOVE IS A PRISM.

LOVE is a prism, and he who looks through
Sees rainbows of rose color, silver and blue,
And everything touched with an unreal light,
That charms and bewilders his sight.

An object may be of the commonest earth,
Of no special beauty or intrinsic worth,
But he who beholds it through Love's magic glass
Will find it the best of its class.

The home that you love, every gable and peak,
Though stained by the storms, and unlovely, and
bleak,
Is covered with vines that are purple with flowers,
The blossoms of Love's happy hours.

And the woman you love, what halos of gold
Encircle her head, e'en the master's of old
Their wonderful hues could not mingle nor fix,
Earth has no such colors to mix.

Yes, love is a prism, and he who looks through,
Sees rainbows of rose color, silver and blue,
And blessed is he, as the angels above,
Who owns the sweet Prism of Love.

MORNING, NOON, NIGHT.

THE clock is striking, it doth say,
“ Awake; arise! 'tis day! 'tis day!
Welcome the new-born Sun to earth,
Let there be music, laughter, mirth,
Let there be feasting, dancing gay,
'Tis the morn of life, 'tis day! 'tis day! ”

The clock is striking twelve, 'tis noon!
The mid-day comes full soon, full soon!
We scarce had glanced at fields and flowers,
Hearts are so light in morning hours,
And now 'tis busiest time of day.
To work! To work! away! away!

The clock is striking, list! the sound!
Silence falls on a new-made mound,
'Tis evening hour, 'tis the hour of death!
Time to part with the fleeting breath,
Time to sleep at the Lord's behest.
The night has come, to rest! to rest!

AFTER.

AFTER the Morn with her pink finger-tips,
Opens the eyes of the golden cowslips,
Ruffles the down on the sleeping birds' wing,
Tenderly swaying the branch where they swing;

After the Noon with his broad open hand,
Sweeps back the curtain of night from the land,
Flooding the earth with the glory of day,
Driving the dimness and shadows away;

After the Eve with her pencil of gold,
Writes down the names of the home-coming fold,
Smiles on each one as she ceaseth to write,
Murmuring low as they enter, "Good-night;"

Then doth the Night in his sables appear
Leadeth each soul to his own waiting bier,
Presses an ebony hand on his brow,
Whispering, "Rest sleepers, blessed art thou."

WHAT WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

IF all things to you should be offered,
If nothing to you were denied,
Say, what would you choose that was proffered,
Would you choose I should stand at your side ?

If many fair maidens were brought you,
To choose for yourself a sweet mate,
If many eyes wooed and besought you,
Would you still for my coming await ?

With jewels and gems spread before you
Of splendor and value untold,
If the wealth of the Indies hung o'er you,
Would my love be more precious than gold ?

I could not be happy in Heaven
If you should prove fickle, untrue,
But if hell, to us both should be given,
Even hell would be Heaven, with you.

REPINING.

Oh, the bird has wings and she flies away
To the far, far lands that I long to see;
I'd rise to the highest mountain grey,
If I, like the bird, were free.

Oh, the ship has sails and she glides along,
To the cave where the red sun hides at eve;
If I were as free as the ship, and strong,
I'd never sit here and grieve.

Oh, the bird would tire of a gilded cage
And her wings would droop and her song would
die,—
And the ship is glad when the billows rage,
And clouds sweep over the sky.

Oh, when shall I open my folded wings,
And fly to the lands that I long to see,
My soul be quit of its murmurings,
And I, like the bird, be free?

THE FLAG AND THE FLOWERS.

GATHER the flowers of the orchard and
meadow,
Roses and lilies and sweet mignonette,
Bind them in wreaths with the fern and the clover
To cover the heroes we can not forget.

Softly the breeze of the springtime is sighing,
Green is the grass o'er each low-lying head,
Proudly the banner of freedom is flying
Over the field of our glorious dead.

Red, white and blue, let the grand colors mingle,
Red of the sunlight and red of the rose,
White of the moonlight through which they were
marching,
White of the lilies and cold winter snows.

Blue of the sky in the hot August weather,
Blue of the steel which their bayonets bore,
Mingle in order their colors together,
Bind them with laurel and cover them o'er.

Sweet may their slumbers be, under the daisies,
Soft may they rest, in the bosom of earth,
Thousands to-day are singing their praises,
Thousands on thousands are telling their worth.

STATUE OF LINCOLN.

HOW grandly, how magnificent he stands
A martyr President, a hero slain,
The parchment folded in his rugged hands,
That gave back liberty to fellow-men.

Upraised above the crowd in massive bronze,
Men seek to do him honor for his worth,
A master-soul, unfettered by the bonds
That dominate the weaker sons of earth.

As he himself, has said of battle-field,
Made sacred by a thousand hero's blood,
We can not consecrate what has been sealed,
Words are but summer showers, great deeds a
flood.

A TRIBUTE.

WRITE, Angel with the pen of flame,
These glowing words beneath his name.

Make thou no mention of the gold
That hid beneath his kirtle's fold.

No record of the flashing gem,
The ermine at his garment's hem.

The ashy honors that he won,
The silver sentences he spun.

These savor of the earthy earth,
Nor fill the measure of his worth.

A grander tribute is his due.
Write—"He was true."

THERE MUST BE A WORLD.

O, THERE must be a world somewhere,
Where souls disappointed in this,
May throw off the burden of care,
And lave in a river of bliss.

For why should the sorrows of one
Be more than another must bear,
You know that the impartial sun,
To each, gives an equable share.

There is surely a world somewhere,
Where they, to whom love is a blight,
Shall find their full measure and share
Of exquisite joy and delight.

To no favored one should be given,
To breath all the sweetest perfume,
Nor should the brave soul that has striven,
Be destined to sorrow and gloom.

So there must be a world, somewhere,
Where all of earth's wrongs are made right,
Where all men shall equally share,
Where rest shall for labor requite.

THE BURNING OF THE SHIP.

THERE was light upon the waters,
And the sound of joy and dancing,
And the silver moon was mirrored in the wave;
And the sobbing music floated,
Now receding, now advancing,
With an under-current telling of the grave.

There was laughter in the cabin,
And the sheen of silken tresses,
And the breast of conscious beauty rose and fell;
Care and trouble were forgotten,
Time is brief, and pleasure presses,—
Over all the music floated with its spell,
But they knew not as they sported,
As they admiration courted,
That they danced upon the burning brink of hell.

In the hold a crimson serpent
Writhed, unchecked along the timbers,
And a hundred merry demons joined the race,
And they courtesied and bended,
And returned, with added numbers,
'Till they filled with vivid glory all the place.

And they mounted on the ladder,
And they wreathed the masts in splendor,
And they flung their scarlet banners wide and free,
And they seized the silken garments,
And the fragile forms and tender,
And they tossed them, burned and blackened in
the sea.

And the dying shriek was blended
With the echo of the laughter,
And the ship went down to darkness and to doom,
And the pleasure was forgotten
In the pain that followed after,
And the night of revel ended in the tomb.

And the little silver shallop
Went a-sailng and a-sailing,
And a thousand silver shallops were reflected in
the wave,
Where so lately rose the music
Softly sighing; softly wailing,
With an undercurrent telling of the grave.

THE HERO.

THE man who plunges in the wave
His sinking brother's life to save,
While he is great and grand and brave,
Is not the only hero.

The man who climbs a mountain high
And flaunts a pennon to the sky,
And makes "Excelsior," his cry,
Is not the only hero.

The general who fought and fell
Amid the flying shot and shell,
Though he deserves the title well,
Is not the only hero.

The stirring sound of drum and fife
May wake a feeble soul to life,
And nerve him on to win the strife,
And make a man a hero.

And yet, he plays a harder part
Who bears within an aching heart,
And gives no token of its smart,
I count him greater hero.

SAILING AWAY.

THY sails are set on the unseen sea,
Sailing away, sailing,
The waves are bearing thee far from me,
Love stands wailing:
Pale mists slowly rise between,
Mists of parting tears, I ween,
Wrapping thee in shadow sheen,
Thy face veiling.

What is this that is borne to me,
Sailing away, sailing?
"Thou'l^t meet again, on the unseen sea;
Cease thy wailing:
Out where the waves of Time, shall be
Met by the waves of Eternity,
Light shall pierce the mists, for thee
All unveiling."

LOVE.

LOVE is the very wildest thing I know,
It springs from nothing in a day or night.
It has no choice of soil, at any height
'Twill flourish freely, 'twill take root and grow
In most unlikely places, frost and snow
But nourish it, fire feeds it, in the white
Heat of the furnace it will bloom more bright,
There is no other thing like love, I trow.

The steel of cold neglect may cut it deep,
The plow of pain may tear its roots in twain,
The scythe of time with slow and steady sweep
May bear it onward, with the chaff and grain
Of friendships kept or broken, and may heap
It over, it will bud, and bloom again.

THE VINE.

As the vine clings to the majestic tree,
Twining its tendrils closer day by day,
All heedless of the wooing winds that play
Among its leaves, so do I cling to thee
In sweet content, knowing thou lovest me.
There may be grander trees further away,
Within the somber forest dim and gray.
The happy vine cares not how that may be.

Nor do I care if fair Apollos reign
Somewhere within the circle of the sun,
Thy tenderness my soul completely fills.
The most appealing charms appeal in vain,
Beauty can win no more when all is won,
True love is more enduring than the hills.

THE RIVER.

O H, River! rolling wide and dark, and deep
Between thy banks, how like that other stream
That flows between two worlds. Thy waters
gleam
With tiny sails, frail vessels yonder creep
Athwart thy waves,—souls seeking home and
sleep.
So doth its wild and stormy bosom teem
With voyagers, brave souls, and weak, whose dream
Of rest will soon be realized. The steep
And des'l late shores of time, shall fade away,
The flowery fields of peace, break on the view,
There hand in hand they 'll meet again, and stray
'Neath cloudless skies, in lands all bright and new.
Roll on, oh river, linger not nor stay,
But bear the sailor home across the blue !

SOLITUDE.

C ALM, sweet loneliness, Solitude miscalled !
Thou art the poet's kindest, truest friend,
Thou shuttest out the vulgar sounds that rend
The fabric of his fancy. When installed
Within thy quiet, peaceful, emerald walled
Retreat, the fairies of the wood attend
His musings. Merry, smiling, nymphs descend
And lightly dance before him, unappalled.

For well they know they have no cause to fear
The silent pale and solitary bard.
Oh, blessed surcease to the burdened ear !
Oh, Solitude, the weary soul's reward,
Where phantom voices speak in accents clear,
And man and nature breathe in full accord !

LIFE.

THIS life is like a snowy, spotless page,
Whereon we write the story of our years,
Our blessings and our sorrows, cares and fears,
The mixed emotions that may sleep, or rage
Within our breasts, the trifles that engage
Us now, the larger, grander plans that bear
Our highest hopes, all deftly written there,
From infancy and youth, to helpless age.

The tale may finished be and laid away,
The hand that writ it turn again to dust;
Its echo lives and echoes on for aye,
After the pen has turned again to rust,
For no man lives unto himself alone,
His dust descends to ages yet unknown!

WE ARE THE SCULPTORS.

WE are the sculptors, Life, the marble block,
And what we carve unchangeable must stand.

Firm, then, should be the purpose, and the hand
Unfalt'ring, lest our execution mock
Our fair design. Let no new-comer knock
Upon our door, with smile and promise bland,
Enticing us. Hear naught but the command
Of that stern, faithful sentinel—the clock!

But better that thy work be illy wrought,
Than idle dreaming, leaving all undone,
Like to the careful servitor that brought
The talent, saying, “Lord, Thou gavest one,
And one I have restored to Thee, for naught
I’ve lost, but fearing much, have added none!”

THE CONQUEROR.

HOW grand is the soul that can say to temptation,
"I never will yield to you, seek not my fall."
Oh! grander than all things beside in creation,
Yes higher, and nobler, and grander than all.
The soldier who never took part in a battle,
Gains honor for courage that never was tried,
But he, who has stood where the musket balls rattle,
Has seen his brave comrade sink down by his side,
Is fitter to boast of his powers of endurance,
May tell of the hardships of years that are past;
His trials are over, he has the assurance
Of marching 'neath Victory's banner at last.
And so 'tis with him who has passed through the fire
Of earthly ambition and passion and love,
Who has crushed out the life of each sinful desire,
And fitted his soul for the glories above.

THE OLD SPANISH MISSION.

Far in the west where the sun goeth down,
An old Spanish Mission lies close to the sea,
Its houses are gray, and its roads dusty brown,
And checkered with sun through the tall pepper
tree,
The old mission church with its crimson tiles gleam-
ing,
Points a white finger aloof to the sky,
O'er the low valley the sunlight is streaming,
Children are chasing a blue butterfly.

Orange trees hung with their apples of gold,
And flowers for the bridal so velvety white,
Laden the air with a fragrance untold,
Smother the senses in dreams of delight.
Sentinel mountains are towering above,
Guarding its sleep through the flight of the years,
But sentinels tall can not keep away love,
With sweet sighs and kisses and sad falling tears.

For there, by the side of a low grassy mound,
A dusky maid, brown with the amorous sun;
Is kneeling, and list to the heart-broken sound,
As softly she tells her black beads, one by one,
"Sancta Marie—let him return to me!"
Dark eyes are pleadingly lifted above,
List the sweet voice that trembles imploringly,
"Come to my arms again, love, oh, my love!"

Gay-hearted rover, he, seeking for pleasure,
Smiles for an hour on the Rose of Castile,
Wakes in her warm heart a love beyond measure,
Love such a heart as his never can feel,
Clasps the brown hand with the clasp of a lover,
Brushes the dew from the rose on her cheek,
Covers again his gold locks, the bold rover;
Riding away, fresher flowers to seek.

Through the brown street, where the sunlight is
falling,
Two behind two with a burden between,
On to the church with the ancient bell calling,
One more white shaft 'neath the moon's silver
sheen.

Far in the love-land, where the red sun sets,
Snows from the orange tree drift o'er her grave,
Under the bell tower, moaning the dove frets,
Restless old ocean heaps wave upon wave.

Oh! for the love that dies not with the summer;
Man is forgetful, and winter is long!
Summer brings *somewhere* another new-comer,
Who could care aught for a last summer song?

SUMMER.

AND now appears the flood-tide of the year,
When everything is full of praise and song,
The busy insects murmur in the ear,
 The brooklet babbles as it flows along
 Like some delighted rustic midst a throng
Of city folk, airing his country lore.
 The river is a mirror for the eyes,
Of angels looking out at Heaven's door,
 A thousand homes are sheltered in the trees,
A thousand anxious mothers tend their young,
 And some sweet sound is borne on every breeze,
Each tiny living creature finds a tongue.
From every roof a silver net is hung,
 The air is vocal with the swelling note,
The flower cups are lifted every one,
 A white cloud rocks the heavens, like a boat
Moored by the golden cables of the sun.
 The happy lovers linger in the lane,
Their tender, foolish story to repeat,
 Their hearts half filled with pleasure, half with
 pain,

Their love the only love quite full, complete.

We feel the wine of gratitude grow sweet
Within our blood, a new resolve we frame,
And all the petty grievances that beat
So strong within us, hide their heads in shame.

We find that all God's gifts unblemished came
From out his hand, and any spot they bear
Is but the rust of envy, and of sin,
The Spoiler's net to catch us unaware.

THE OWL.

A N old owl sat on a broken tree,
He cried, "To wit! to woo!"
The night was dark as it well could be,
But he cared naught for the dark, not he.
To wit! to wit! to woo!

A maiden fair, and a dashing beau,
Presumably, to woo!
Came strolling by that way, you know,
They walked, as lovers do, quite slow.
To woo! to woo! to woo!

Now this brave youth had vainly tried
To woo! to woo! to woo!
And ask the maid to be his bride,
But his tongue hung motionless and tied,
To wit! to wit! to woo!

But when the owl in the darkness said:
"To wit! to woo! to woo!"
His tongue was loosened in his head,
His courage rose, and his fear it fled,
To wit! to wit! to woo!

“ The bird 's in sympathy you see!
He cries, to woo! to woo!
Oh! Mary dear, shall we wedded be,
For I love you, do you love me?”
To wit! to wit! to woo!

The maiden blushed till the woods were light!
To hear her lover woo!
It made the old owl blink with fright,
To see the day come in the night!
He cried out, “ woo! to woo! ”

THE CITY OF PEACE.

I KNOW of a city, it lies on a hill,
A beautiful city, so quiet and still,
Where never a sound breaks the perfect repose,
Where none from his own silent mansion e'er goes.

The glad ones of earth from its drives keep aloof,
Its streets seldom echo to wheel or to hoof,
Save another pale sleeper is lowered to rest
Where none of earth's turmoil can ever molest.

The grass groweth green in this city, we find,
Its walls are with ivy and roses entwined,
The tall lilies nod their fair heads in the breeze,
But none of its people take notice of these.

The sunlight may fall there in rays soft and warm,
The black clouds may gather, portending a storm,
To none will its blackness give fear or alarm,
For nothing can bring either pleasure or harm.

Some day I shall claim—for myself an abode,—
On me shall the blessing of death be bestowed,
For me all life's turmoil and sorrow shall cease,
And I shall find rest, in the City of Peace.

OCTOBER.

THE autumn's gorgeous tints do put to shame
The green and tender freshness of the spring,
And summer's vernal glory seemeth tame,
Since Father Time hath made October king.
He trails his yellow mantle o'er the field,
Its hem is decked with scarlet and with brown,
The silver of his tresses is concealed
Beneath the golden fillet of his crown.

The earth has yielded to his mighty sword,
He turns the crimson life-blood into wine,
And choosing what he will from ruddy hoard,
Alone, in regal splendor doth he dine.
He 'mindeth one of haughty savage chief,
So careless he of victim's blood or grief !

MY CREED.

I HOLD, that whosoe'er has fought the fight,
And borne the heat and burden of the day,
And onward pressed along the stony way,
Seeking to do the thing he thought was right,
Will wear a crown of glory, to requite
His toil and self-denial, though it may
Be that his efforts seemed to go astray,
And altogether fail in our weak sight.

For failure or success, can only be
Measured by Him who knoweth the whole plan,
Who only here and there a line can see,
Knoweth but little, hence shall any man
Oppose himself to God, or say that He
Hath failed in aught He ever yet began?

A LITTLE FURTHER ON.

A LITTLE further on the skies are brighter,
And softer breezes blow o'er scented fields,
The distant clouds are fleecier and whiter,
And sweeter music o'er the senses steals,
A little further on.

A little further on life is immortal,
Nor pain, nor sorrow ever can molest,
The joys we've missed shall meet us at the portal
The hands we've loved shall lead us into rest,
A little further on.

AUTUMN IS HERE.

HEIGHO! Summer is waning,
Dead grass is lying low at our feet,
The cricket is singing under the eaves,
The air is full of the dark, falling leaves.
Sunflowers are black by the brown dusty roadside,
Numberless haystacks are dotting the meadow wide,
Summer is waning, autumn is here.

Autumn has come, with yellowing corn,
Sounds on the hills the far away horn,
Wary Jack Frost stealeth by in the night,
Spreading his gossamer blanket of white;
Writes on the window with sharp pointed tools,
Covers with glass all the low-lying pools,
Knocks down the nuts from the tall hickory trees,
Lays a cold hand on the soft summer breeze,
Scatters the leaves over dead summer's bier,
Uncanny Autumn surely is here.

AT SEVEN AND TEN.

THE richest king that is under heaven,
Has no more treasure than we had then,
When I was ten, and you were seven.
When you were seven, and I was ten.

I was a knight with a golden sabre,
You were a lady, the fairest fair,
Your dainty hands knew no hint of labor,
The earth was swept with your sable hair.

The summer house was a princely palace,
Your skirt was 'broidered with priceless pearls,
The small tin cup was a golden chalice,
I was the son of an hundred earls.

My milk-white steed in its regal splendor,
Curveted over the garden path,
And once, he trampled a luckless vender,
I thrashed him well in my kingly wrath!

I sailed the seas of the little garden,
I played the billows were mountain high,
And I was "lost" like the hapless Arden,
But I came back to you by and by.

And the Philip Rays of your girlish fancy
Have all been wrecked on the sands of life,
For you have been faithful and loving, Nancy,
These fifty years I have called you wife.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO FORGET?

HOW long does it take to forget?
A week, or a month, or a year?
How soon do we cease to regret
The loss of what once was so dear?

Ah! he who has stood on the shore,
And witnessed his loved ones depart,
Must list to the waves evermore,
That sound and re-sound in his heart.

The heart it may sleep and may dream,
But unbroken rest can not come,
For sad recollection will teem
With the past, though the lips may be dumb.

It has not been given to man
To choose to forget or retain,
And since we know naught of the plan,
A limit to fix, would be vain.

Then say not, a heart can forget
Its love in a day or a year,
Or ever can cease to regret
The loss of what once was so dear.

PROMISES.

“WHEN I am grown a man, mamma dear,
I'll build for you a palace, do you hear?
And I'll make it very grand,
Just the finest in the land,
All of marble, understand, mamma dear ?

I'll buy you rings and chains, mamma dear,
All the nice things earth contains, never fear,
And I'll buy a dress for you
Either white or either blue,
Or perhaps I'll get you two, mamma dear.”

He never grew a man here below,
But the palace has been built, that I know,
And I hope to enter there,
His immortal bliss to share,
And the promised robe to wear, when I go.

TWO CITIES.

A FAIRY city! on the shore
Of blue and silver sea,
All dotted by the ships that lie
Full sheltered in the lee.
With golden dome and minaret,
And upward pointing spire,
It looks a very world of peace,
Where one could never tire
Of sailing o'er the calm lagoon,
Of strolling in the shade,
Of tangled gardens full of bloom,
And colors bright arrayed.
List! to the chiming of the bells,
The sound of distant lute!
While each sweet sound its story tells,
Well might man's voice be mute.
If man can build so fair a shrine,
What must that city be,
All builded by the hand of God,
Beside the eternal sea?

PROCRASTINATION.

PROCRASTINATION is the god's best gift.
Possession shows a blemish on the fruit.
He happiest is, who never finds the rift,
That lies within the bosom of the lute.

A thing is good and perfect to a man,
Who views afar the handiwork of art,
But if too near its beauties he would scan,
A tell-tale patch appears on every part.

The wish to kiss is sweeter than the deed.
The looking forward is the keenest joy.
Who thinks to fill the measure of his greed,
His mouth is filled with ashes and alloy!

Who plucks the rose must also pluck the thorn,
And thorns, than roses, oft have longer lives.
One might not think until one's hand is torn
That stings and honey both are in the hives!

Who always thinks to sail, but never sails,
Looks forward to the journey day by day,
Yet has no ship to perish by the gales,
That wreck a thousand others on the way!

He is the Solomon of human kind,
Who stands with folded arms beside the sea,
And says, "To-morrow I will trust the wind,"
Then makes that morrow reach eternity!

SECOND LOVE.

O H, second love! the Indian summer of the heart,
Red-leaved October of life's golden year,
Less rosy than the green-clad queen, thou' art,
But not less dear!

First love is like the nodding springtime flower
That gayly bends with every passing breeze;
Last love is like the fruit which autumn's hour
Hangs on the trees.

First love is like the noisy mountain rill
That loudly tells its story to the wind;
Last love is like the river broad and still,
Deep-souled and kind.

First love is like the summer sun at noon,
The soul grows weary of its torrid heat;
Last love is like the ray of harvest moon,
Tender and sweet.

First love is like the foam upon the cup,
In sparkling bubbles to the red lip prest,
But like the nectar which it covers up,
Last love is best.

AUTUMN.

IN the woods I love to linger,
When the days are soft and mellow,
And the Autumn's gypsy finger
Tints the leaves with red and yellow.

See the nimble squirrel leaping
Over hedges, over ditches;
See the chipmunk slyly peeping,
From the rocks and hidden niches.

Where the sunlight's golden lance is
Softly through the tree-tops falling,
O'er the rippling stream it dances,
Hear the pheasant loudly calling.

Longer now the shades are growing,
On the day's bright dress encroaching,
And the distant cattle's lowing
Tells that evening is approaching.

VICTORY.

If, through pain, you learn a lesson of content,
Then pain becomes a tree of golden fruit,
And sorrow is a blessing Heaven-sent,
Which you can bravely bear in silence mute.

If you can find, before the sun is set,
A spot in some fair island of the west,
Where you may drink of Lethe and forget
The thorny paths your aching feet have pressed,

Then count yourself a victor, laurel-crowned,
For many, many tread the weary way
Who find no panacea for their wound,
No happy isle of rest at closing day.

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